



VOCAL NEWS



Serving Those Who Served



VOCAL members and staff participated in eight service projects in honor of Veteran's Day 2018: Serving Those Who Served. Activities kicked off early at 6:00 a.m. on a chilly Saturday, the 10th of November. Two VOCAL members braced the cold and early morning sunlight to attend the Chill William's Veteran Day 5K where they assisted with a variety of tasks from setting up tables to registering attendees to rallying those participating in the run.

Activities continued on Sunday, November 11th, Veterans Day proper, at the National Veteran's Art Museum with members acting as docents for museum attendees on a day that museum staff expected to be a lot busier than normal. Members not only got to volunteer but also view the art, and hear stories from veterans and interact with them as well. Two of the members who are Veterans themselves, Timothy White and Loretta Coleman, particularly enjoyed swapping war stories with veterans visiting the museum that day.

On Monday, November 12th, Veterans Day celebrated, numerous members began their day at a 6:00 a.m. breakfast at Mt. Pisgah's Veterans New Beginnings, which is a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) home for veterans. Once there, members served breakfast to the veteran residents, learned about the services offered, and interacted with the vets, hearing personal stories and getting a better understanding of what Veterans Day means to them. Sponsored by Chicago Cares, the event was televised on WCIU's morning show The Jam.

Later in the day another group of members headed over to the Rhine Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2729 to participate in a program the Post was presenting for students from nearby Gloria Dei School on the meaning of Veteran's Day and service to country. The program began with a presentation of arms followed by members of the Post, representing the various branches of the military, speaking about their service experience and the role the armed forces play in protecting our country. The formal presentation was followed by a Q & A with the students showing interest and asking thoughtful questions. LVI's Executive Director also spoke to the students about the role national service plays in strengthening our country's communities. The program concluded with LVI members treating the students, faculty, veterans and their families to a hot dog lunch.

VOCAL members in Kewanee also participated in a variety of Veteran-related activities. On Veteran's Day-celebrated, the YMCA sponsored a full day of programming that had VOCAL members assisting day camp youth in designing a flag with handprints to honor the veterans and providing tours and enrolling veteran and military families who visited that for 3-weeks of free Y membership. Leading up to Veteran's Day, Kewanee members on November 10th participated in the American Legion's Salute to Vets at which they helped to prepare desserts, serve coffee and provide general clean-up. Attending that event were the Commanders of the American Legion and VFW posts, the Posts' Poppy Girls and Boys, Kewanee Mayor Steve Looney and several city council members. The program ended with the Firing Squad and the playing of Taps. In a solo project, member Damien Neiryck created a video honoring veterans that was played at Weathersfield School program on November 9th. Finally, in a post-Veteran's Day activity, several members joined with Kewanee's Salvation Army in serving "Donuts for Soldiers" at two National Guard units.





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From the Executive Director ...

Holiday Message

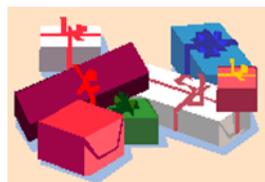


***Happy
Holidays
to all of our***

***AmeriCorps members,
site supervisors, trainers,
public and private contributors
and program and agency supporters
who have aided and assisted us in ways
too numerous to enumerate. Your positive
attitudes and giving spirits are inspirations to us
and we are very thankful to have each of you as a
part of us. May your holiday season be filled with
the many blessings of family and friends and may
you have a happy, healthy, and
extremely rewarding 2019***

The

***Staff and
Board of Literacy
Volunteers of Illinois***



**Coming Up Soon..
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
January 21st, 2019**

Quarterly Member Training and Meeting

Literacy Volunteers of Illinois had a busy beginning week of December, hosting not one but three events: a half-day Member Training and the much anticipated Holiday Party on Thursday, followed by the all-day Quarterly Member Meeting on Friday.

The member activities kicked off at 1 p.m. on the 6th of December, as LVI conducted a member training that centered around the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment. This was a training that allowed members to gain insight as to how their personality can dictate the way they approach life, their tutoring and in general interacting with students and staff at their hosts sites as well as their fellow AmeriCorps members. Members came to the training with varying levels of exposure to the MBTI, so this training was either a complete introduction for those with no background or gave further insight for members who had taken the assessment before.



Members received an online survey to complete the week before the training, with questions that gauged their reactions to specific situations as well as general preferences. The training was facilitated by Gabriel Najera, principal of the Najera Consulting Group. He started the training by giving members a brief overview of the different criteria used in determining the different personality types. During the presentation of introduction material, members were given the opportunity to self-assess themselves before they were ever given their assessment results.

Following the initial self assessment each member was given their personality types as well as a list of the personality types among their fellow VOCAL AmeriCorps members. The personality types of members varied from ISTJs to ESFPs and everything in-between, showing the corps to be a diverse group of personalities and personality types. Gabriel Najera then took the time to explain the characteristics, strengths, and cautions associated with all sixteen personality types.



There were four different preference scales that make up the personality type on the MBTI: Extraversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling, and Judging/Perceiving. Once each of these categories were explained to members, members analyzed their results individually and then amongst groups.

Members were not only able to identify and understand their type but also learn more about their fellow members and the way that the different types can collaborate with one another especially when in project oriented environments.

Quarterly Member Meeting and Training (continued)



The following day, Friday, December 7th VOCAL members were at the Literacenter bright and early for the first Member Meeting of this service term. This Quarterly Meeting provided an opportunity for members to share their experience at their respective host sites with fellow members that perhaps they haven't seen since initial orientation meetings. Members discussed the service they were performing, shared their rewards and challenges and opened up the conversation to other members who had helpful input or similar experiences.

The discussions were facilitated by Member Coordinator, Gabriel Perez, who did a great job in deepening the conversations. After each member's presentation, fellow members were given the opportunity to ask questions, offer advice, or simply connect with what was being said.

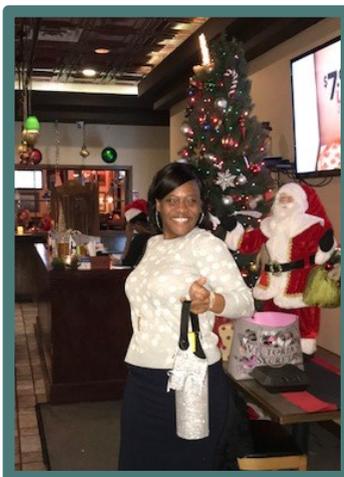
It was a great way to hear about the work being done by members at large that at times does not get noticed because of the widespread nature of volunteering at many host sites in Chicago and around the State.

- Maria Alvarez, Program Associate
Literacy Volunteers of Illinois



LVI Holiday Party December 6th, 2018

Following the Thursday Member Training, LVI Staff, Board and VOCAL Members gathered at the Exchequer Pub and Restaurant for LVI's annual Holiday Party. Guests were greeted by a fully decked out room and food and drinks in abundance. Each guest was encouraged to bring a gift to be used for the Yankee Swap, which proved once again to be lively entertainment for the night. After all was said and done, everyone walked away with a gift, some more coveted than others. The Holiday party was a wonderful way to collectively kick back and kick-off the holiday season.



Member Spotlights



Cecilia Garcia is a second term AmeriCorps member with Centro Sin Fronteras. Cecilia was born and raised in Chicago hailing from the southwest side of the city. Prior to AmeriCorps, Cecilia was a medical assistant. In addition to her work as a medical assistant, she was involved with youth community outreach. She joined AmeriCorps because she was already involved in community outreach and was told by her pastor of this opportunity in national service. Cecilia believes being involved with AmeriCorps is not only a great way to continue her community outreach but also develop professionally and meet a diverse group of people.

Cecilia sees her role at Centro Sin Fronteras as one of advocate. In this capacity she supports families dealing with repercussions of the broken immigration system: providing emotional support by accompanying them to hearings. Another big part of her role at Centro Sin Fronteras is creating a greater awareness of the issues that immigrant communities are facing in Chicago. She finds it important to shed light on these issues, especially in neighboring communities that do not know what is happening in neighborhoods right next door to them. In the end, she says, it is all about making people feel empowered and through empowerment help the people in her community gain confidence.

She finds seeing her community progress extremely rewarding. Sometimes she sees large improvements and sometimes they are small victories but even in these small victories, students gain confidence and independence through learning English. She finds the challenges to be when her students lose motivation because of small roadblocks.

Outside of Centro Sin Fronteras, Cecilia enjoys reading and listening to alternative rock and music from the 60's and 70's. After her service, Cecilia not only wants to continue being an advocate for her community but pursue higher studies. She sees herself getting her nursing degree, continuing her passion for nursing.



Amelia Lerch is a first term AmeriCorps member with Centro Sin Fronteras. She was born and raised in Chicago. She completed her undergraduate work at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin where she majored in physics, and is currently pursuing a medical degree at Rush University in Chicago. Amelia has long been affiliated with Centro Sin Fronteras leading workshops in career readiness at Lincoln Methodist Church site, which is their Pilsen site. In order to better focus her efforts in helping the members of Pilsen and other nearby communities, Amelia decided to join AmeriCorps. This decision allowed her to more fully dedicate her time and further expand her efforts, especially in health literacy.

At Centro Sin Fronteras, Amelia supervises their school-based health fairs and weekend health screenings. Apart from her supervising the health fairs, Amelia also teaches a health curriculum and various schools in Chicago.

Amelia is a certified Emergency Management Technician (EMT) and uses this training to assist with many tasks. She also recruits volunteers for Centro Sin Fronteras, and focuses on recruiting fellow med students at Rush.

Amelia believes the biggest reward of being an AmeriCorps member at Centro Sin Fronteras is the ability to connect with people. However, one of the biggest challenges is recruiting volunteers and continued community service engagement. After her term with AmeriCorps, she plans to continue her studies and sees herself working as a health professional. Outside of AmeriCorps, Amelia enjoys playing video games.

Member Spotlights (continued)



Zilagi Velasco is a second term member at Centro Sin Fronteras. She was a part-time member in her first year, and became a full-time member this year. Zilagi was born and raised in Chicago on the southwest side.

Zilagi was introduced to AmeriCorps and the VOCAL program through her church. Even before joining AmeriCorps, Zilagi would volunteer her time to help her church in any capacity that she could. She would help where she was needed the most or even when she just had some free time to give. This is something that she is able to continue to do as a VOCAL member. Zilagi was welcomed into this program not knowing what it was about and what exactly her role would be but she knew her main goal was to give back to the community.

Like any other VOCAL AmeriCorps member, Zilagi is faced with many challenges but also with many rewards. It is a reward just to help members in her community. One of the best feelings for her is showing her community that someone is there for them.

After her second term with AmeriCorps, Zilagi hopes to attend college. She is currently thinking about attending a nearby community college, Richard J. Daley College. She hasn't settled on a particular major but is between studying law or medicine in the future. Her broader goal is to have a major that she really enjoys and one that would allow her to continue making a difference in her community. Outside of AmeriCorps, she enjoys listening to music and above all else keeping things organized.

Diva Jordan was born in Chicago and raised in Texas. She moved back to Chicago during her high school years. She has a Mexican and Jamaican background. Diva attended Lewis University for a while, she studied rigorously to be a pilot but at the end did not finish.

Before she joined AmeriCorps, Diva was working for a gaming retail store. After a year working at the gaming store she had the frightening experience of being robbed at gunpoint, she couldn't work for the company anymore. She noticed the community around her suffering like she was and she told herself that she needed to help others. She needed to not be selfish and chase lucrative jobs, but rather meaningful jobs. This is why Diva decided to join AmeriCorps.

Her role as the Youth Health Coordinator is to schedule all classes within their north side house of operation called Robles De Justicia. She works with members from the community as well as schools. They teach a wide variety of classes from karate classes to nutrition and citizenship classes. The main focus is to provide a safe and comfortable area for the underserved to come and get free education to help better themselves and their future's. She finds it rewarding to have an entire family sitting in for her English classes. She finds the language to be a barrier, but as they grow she grows.

She plans on continuing her journey at Centro Sin Fronteras. She has two dogs a Siberian Husky and her son who is mixed with a pitbull. She also enjoys reading. She is currently reading: *Elvira's Faith & Barrack's Challenge* and *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*.

Centro Sin Fronteras (Center without Borders) was founded by Pastor Emma Lozano in 1987 to keep the legacy of her brother slain community activist Rudy Lozano alive. It is one of Chicago's oldest existing Mexican organizations. The mission of Centro Sin Fronteras is to provide outreach, education and services to principally low-income immigrant populations. Based in Pilsen at the Lincoln United Methodist Church, Centro Sin Fronteras offers services at various locations in numerous Chicago communities as well as some suburban communities.

Member Spotlights (continued)



Miriam Perez is a second term AmeriCorps member with Centro Sin Fronteras. Miriam was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. Before settling in Chicago, she lived in Texas. Miriam graduated from Robert Morris University with a degree in Sports Medicine. Miriam earned a scholarship to Robert Morris University, playing Division I basketball during her undergraduate career.

Before her time with AmeriCorps, Miriam worked with Chicago Public Schools as a youth coordinator. In this role, Miriam was able to work with students and share her passion for health education with them.

At Centro Sin Fronteras, Miriam takes on various different roles and duties including, teaching ESL, heading Zumba and kickboxing classes, educating the community about nutrition, conducting CPR classes, and event taking women to get mammograms. She also hosts health fairs, teaches health-centered classes at Chicago Public Schools, and works on recruiting students from schools like UIC to be volunteers. She joined AmeriCorps because it was a great way to continue and advance the community work with which she was already engaged. One of the most rewarding aspects of her work with Centro Sin Fronteras is when she is able to see the students of the community attend college, and it is even more rewarding when she is able to connect students with her passion for health education. During her time at Centro Sin Fronteras, Miriam has enjoyed seeing the program expand and grow.

After her time at AmeriCorps, Miriam will finish her clinicals for nursing. She hopes to become a doctor's assistant, continuing to serve her community in this role. Outside of her role at Centro Sin Fronteras, Miriam spends her time with her children and playing basketball. Miriam plays basketball at a local league, continuing her love for the sport after her college career.



Jasmin Reyes is a first term AmeriCorps member at Centro Sin Fronteras. Jasmin was born in Belize and moved to the states when she was 13 years old. Jasmin is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Professional Health Studies at Robert Morris University. She is in her last year as an undergrad and will be a first generation college graduate this coming July.

Before AmeriCorps, Jasmin was attending college and babysitting on the side. She first learned about AmeriCorps when she was looking to fulfill her school's internship requirement and found that it was a great way to help and engage with her community at-large and in a capacity that allowed her to apply what she was learning in the classroom. Jasmin serves as a Youth Health Service Coordinator with Centro Sin Fronteras. In this role, she recruits volunteers, teaches classes on various health related topics at 22 Chicago schools, and hosts health fairs periodically. She hopes that by spreading awareness to community members, there will be a domino effect of awareness.

Apart from instructive work, Jasmin along with fellow Centro Sin Fronteras members registers community members for preventive screenings.

One of the biggest rewards that she has experienced at her host site is the direct application she is able to have with what she is learning in the classroom to the community she serves. Also personal growth in the area of public speaking has been another reward she has experienced, she is now a more confident public speaker because of her work in classrooms .

After AmeriCorps, Jasmin wants to continue to serve her community at large. She sees herself going back to Belize and opening up her own wellness center. Outside of school and volunteering, Jasmin enjoys staying active, playing basketball and soccer. Music is another one of her outside interest, particularly Bob Marley.

Upcoming Dates

Friday, January 4th, 2019

9:00 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

Member Training
Swiss Family Roombinson

Monday, January 21st, 2019

A Day On—Not Off

MLK Day of Service
Multiple Service Locations

Friday, February 1st, 2019

9:00 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

Member Training
Roombinson Crusoe

Mark Your Calendars !

28th Annual



Saturday, March 23rd

9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Tutor & Adult Learner Conference and Awards Presentation

UIC Center for Literacy

1040 W. Harrison

Chicago, IL

LVI's SOCIAL NETWORKS



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Links to social media are also on the LVI
homepage.

★ HAPPY ★ BIRTHDAY!

December

Zilagi Velasco

12/02

January

Aurora Lucas

1/10

Carol Taylor

1/20

Cheryl Turner

1/26